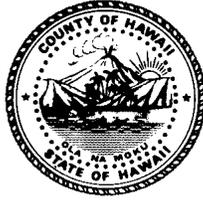


C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.  
*Mayor*



Benson Medina  
*Director*

William V. Brillhante, Jr.  
*Managing Director*

Dennis Lin  
*Deputy Director*

## DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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March 2, 2026

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Thursday, March 5, 2026  
10:16AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 211

TESTIMONY ON  
SB2001 Relating to the Banyan Drive Community Development District

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Benson Medina, and I serve as the Director of the Department of Research and Development for the County of Hawai'i. I write today in **STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2001**, which would establish the **Banyan Drive Community Development District and the Banyan Drive Community Development District Special Fund** under the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA), along with a dedicated special fund to support long-term planning, stewardship, and revitalization.

HB 2616 represents a rare and meaningful opportunity to align **economic development, cultural and historic preservation, and community enrichment** in one of Hawai'i Island's most iconic and historically significant corridors.

The Banyan Drive area is not only a place of scenic beauty and visitor appeal — it is also a space of cultural memory and community identity. For decades, this corridor has held great potential, yet it has faced persistent challenges related to long-term investment, coordinated planning, infrastructure needs, and stewardship responsibilities.

This bill provides a structure that can finally move the area forward in a way that is both **strategic and values-driven**.

From an economic development perspective, a thoughtfully revitalized Banyan Drive can:

- Expand opportunities for **local job creation** and workforce participation
- Strengthen the visitor economy through a **higher-quality visitor experience**
- Support local entrepreneurs and small businesses tied to cultural, hospitality, and recreation sectors

- Increase the attractiveness of Hilo as a destination for **responsible, place-based tourism**

At the same time, SB 2001 supports what matters most to our residents — that redevelopment must protect and uplift the cultural and historic significance of the area. The bill's approach creates an opportunity to balance **cultural enrichment, community uses, and economic activities**, rather than prioritizing one at the expense of the others.

This is the kind of long-term planning Hawai'i Island needs: development that strengthens our economy while honoring place, preserving history, and ensuring community access and benefit.

For these reasons, the County of Hawai'i Department of Research and Development respectfully urges the Committee to pass SB 2001.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your leadership on this important measure.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

**Benson Medina**  
Director, Department of Research and Development  
County of Hawai'i

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA  
P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY  
CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER  
AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
Acting Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on  
WAYS AND MEANS  
AND  
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Thursday, March 5, 2026  
10:16 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 2001  
RELATING TO THE BANYAN DRIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Senate Bill 2001 proposes to establish the Banyan Dive Community Development District and the Banyan Drive Community Development District Special Fund. It also specifies the powers and duties of the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) as it relates to the new development district. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) appreciates and supports this measure.**

The Department recognizes that the Waiakea peninsula area, which includes Banyan Drive, is underutilized, but has an exceptional potential for revitalization. Further, the Department acknowledges the frustration over the current state of the area and recognizes the need for and importance of revitalizing and redeveloping the area. The Department notes that it is actively working with HCDA on a master plan for the proposed development district.

As a majority of the lands within the proposed development district are owned by the State, the Department supports this measure due to its potential to address significant costs associated with the redevelopment of the area and appreciates that this measure incorporates comments we provided on a similar measure last session.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



**HAWAII COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

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Telephone: (808) 594-0300 Fax: (808) 587-0299  
Web site: <http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda/>

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR

STERLING HIGA  
CHAIRPERSON

CRAIG K. NAKAMOTO  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Statement of  
**CRAIG K. NAKAMOTO**  
**Executive Director**

Hawai'i Community Development Authority  
before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**  
and the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Thursday, March 5, 2026  
10:16 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**SB 2001**  
**RELATING TO THE BANYAN DRIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT.**

Chairperson Dela Cruz, Chairperson Lee, Vice Chairperson Moriwaki, Vice  
Chairperson Inouye and members of the Committees:

The Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) **supports SB 2001** with  
comments. Last year, HCDA commenced a multi-year effort to develop a community-  
driven master plan for the Waiākea Peninsula in Hilo, Hawai'i. This reflects the  
Legislature's intent to initiate planning for the redevelopment of state lands in the  
Waiākea Peninsula, as authorized by an appropriation in Act 230, Session Laws of  
Hawai'i, 2024. HCDA is committed to this planning effort, particularly in anticipation of  
legislation this session that would formally establish the district within the HCDA's  
jurisdiction. HCDA's comments for the committee's consideration, are as follows:

1. Adopt a simplified name for the proposed community development district  
by replacing all references to "Banyan Drive" with "Waiākea." HCDA understands the  
importance of nā inoa, or place names, in elevating history, promoting cultural  
awareness, and educating communities. HCDA's other community development  
districts have geographic place names in 'Olelo Hawai'i, including Kaka'ako, Kalaeloa,  
He'eia, and Pūlehunui. The name of this district should reflect its geographic location

while strengthening the community's sense of place. HCDA also recognizes that certain names may not always be culturally appropriate or desirable. The history and significance of place names within the district, such as Makaokū or Banyan Drive, should be carefully researched and vetted through community engagement and cultural consultation. Appropriate ways to acknowledge and honor the history and relative importance of these names can be addressed through a cultural landscape or historic preservation plan, developed in collaboration with the community, the State Historic Preservation Division, and other stakeholders as the district is revitalized.

2. Align the proposed district to be consistent with the organizational structure of HCDA's other districts by deleting Lines 4 to 13, on Page 3 of SB 2001. In HCDA's existing community development districts, the composition and jurisdiction of the authority members are established as a subset of the general authority board in § 206E-3, HRS. Each community development district is not established as a separate agency, but the voting membership of each community development district is limited to a subset of the authority that includes the designated resident and small business representatives of that community.

The proposed community development district is established on Page 2, lines 14 to 21 and continues to Page 3, lines 1 to 3. The composition and jurisdiction of the authority members is established on Page 8, line 10 thru Page 19, line 21, which amends § 206E-3, HRS.

As such, the language on Page 3, Lines 4 to 13, which establishes a separate Banyan Drive redevelopment agency, conflicts with these other provisions and is unnecessary and should be deleted.

3. Replace references to the "chairperson of the Banyan Drive redevelopment agency" with "the chairperson of the Banyan Drive Hawai'i Redevelopment Agency, County of Hawai'i or designee." The Banyan Drive Hawai'i Redevelopment Agency (BDHRA) was created in 2016 by the County of Hawai'i pursuant to the Urban Renewal Law, § 53, HRS, to redevelop the Banyan Drive Peninsula. HCDA suggests that the BDHRA chairperson or designee should have an ex-officio position on the Authority and be eligible to vote on matters affecting this

district. Among the relevant references that would need to be revised or deleted are as follows:

- Revise the Language: Page 8, lines 19 to 20;
- Revise the Language: Page 11, lines 5 to 6;
- Revise the Language: Page 17, lines 14 - 15;
- Delete the Language: Page 17, lines 20 to 21, continuing to page 18, lines 1 to 3; and
- Page 18, lines 13 to 14.

4. Add new subsection (c) after Page 5, line 7 which adds provisions for a community advisory council that is selected by the authority and includes at least one lineal or cultural descendant with ties to the Waiākea ahupua'a that is selected with input from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Specific proposed language is as follows:

**(c) The authority shall establish a community advisory council to provide guidance and assure effective citizen participation in the redevelopment of the district. The community advisory council shall consist of community stakeholders that are selected by the authority and include at least one lineal or cultural descendant with ties to the Waiākea ahupua'a that is selected with input from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.**

The HCDA is undergoing a master planning process for the Waiakea peninsula that will result in a community master plan, which will shape the future of the area. We suggest that the lineal or cultural descendants have a place on the community advisory committee that we are forming for the master planning effort. Having lineal or cultural descendants on a community advisory committee will be more impactful on the future of the Waiakea peninsula than if they were serving on the authority. In addition, HCDA's board already includes a cultural specialist, who provides guidance to the Authority.

Sections 4 and 5 appropriates funding and one full-time equivalent position. The funding and the position provided are essential for HCDA to implement this bill. Upon completion of a community master plan, HCDA must promulgate zoning rules, perform

Senate Committee on WAM and WLA

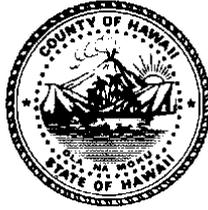
March 5, 2026

Page 4

an environmental impact statement, and other necessary analysis and those efforts require funding and staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.**  
*Mayor*



**William V. Brillhante, Jr.**  
*Managing Director*

**Merrick Nishimoto**  
*Deputy Managing Director*

## *County of Hawai'i ~ Office of the Mayor*

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Testimony of  
**C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.**  
Mayor, County of Hawai'i

Before the Senate Committees on  
**Ways and Means**  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

**Water, Land, Culture and the Arts**  
Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

**Thursday, March 5, 2026, 10:16 a.m.**  
State Capitol Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**Senate Bill 2001**  
**Relating to the Banyan Drive Community Development District**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committees,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 2001. This measure establishes the Banyan Drive Community Development District and its Special Fund. It also specifies the powers and duties of the Hawai'i Community Development Authority for the new district.

Banyan Drive is a key gateway to Hilo with cultural and economic importance. The area faces ongoing challenges with infrastructure, safety, and underutilization. This measure establishes a redevelopment framework through the Hawai'i Community Development Authority. This aligns with our urgency to emphasize cultural preservation and responsible redevelopment.

Senate Bill 2001 presents a real opportunity to revitalize Banyan Drive. We respectfully urge the committees to pass this measure and appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

**TESTIMONY WITH COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL 2001**  
RELATING TO THE BANYAN DRIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts  
Hawai'i State Capitol

Malaki 5, 2026

10:16am

Lumi 211

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Aloha e Chairs Dela Cruz, Lee, Vice Chairs Moriwaki, Inouye, and Senate Members of the Committees:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) provides **COMMENTS** on SB2001, which will create a new Banyan Drive Community Development District (District) within the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA), and establish a special fund "to improve and safeguard the cultural, economic, and social value of this vital area." As part of the creation of the District, the bill also proposes the Banyan Drive-Makaokū Redevelopment Agency (Agency) that will have authority to engage in "planning, design, and construction activities within and outside the district."

OHA respectfully recommends amendments to ensure a more accurate reflection of the District's history, and representation of Native Hawaiian interests given that the bulk of this district is comprised of former crown and government lands of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Specifically, OHA requests that the Committee amend the bill to: (1) name OHA as a member of the HCDA with jurisdiction over the District and Agency; (2) inclusion of a Makaokū lineal descendant member; and (3) and for the governor to appoint the cultural specialist and lineal descendant members to the Agency after consulting with OHA.

The District is Comprised of Former Crown & Government Lands That OHA is Constitutionally and Statutorily Mandated to Protect.

To carry out the requirements of the Hawai'i Admission Act, Art. XII Sec. 4 of the Hawai'i State Constitution makes clear that the public land trust must be administered for the betterment of the conditions of native Hawaiians and for the general public. Further, OHA was created and charged with managing proceeds derived from the public land trust, pursuant to under Art. XII Secs. 5 and 6. Accordingly, OHA has a constitutional mandate to ensure that the state upholds its fiduciary obligations under the public land trust, including by acting with prudence and due diligence in making its trust corpus productive and maximizing its benefits for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries. Thus, insofar as the new District is made up of public land trust lands, OHA is willing and able to assist the HCDA in fulfilling the state's fiduciary obligations, by serving as a member of the HCDA with jurisdiction over the District.

Further, the bulk of the land managed held by the state in the public land trust, including land in the District, is government or crown land that was unlawfully seized in 1893 and then “ceded” by the Republic of Hawai‘i to the United States in 1898, “without the consent of or compensation to the Native Hawaiian people of Hawaii or their sovereign government[.]”<sup>1</sup> Given that Native Hawaiians have never relinquished their claims to this land corpus, and that “ceded” land may eventually serve as a land base for a Native Hawaiian self-governing entity, OHA has long sought to ensure that the state does not alienate these lands, and that it maintains these lands to ensure the corpus’ viability and availability for the future lāhui.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, because much of the new District consists of crown and government lands, providing OHA with a seat on the HCDA with jurisdiction over the District will help ensure that Native Hawaiian claims and interests are protected and that the environmental, cultural, economic, and other values of these and adjoining lands receive appropriate consideration.

Including a Makaokū Lineal Descendant as an Agency Voting Member is Critical to Honor Place & for Redevelopment Success.

Successful redevelopment requires community support, buy-in, and consultation. HCDA redevelopment in Hilo must ensure community representation. As reflected in the ‘ōlelo noeau, “Ua hilo ‘ia ke aho a ke aloha”<sup>3</sup> (“Braided with the cords of love), the ‘āina of Hilo carries a beloved history and cultural significance that should be thoughtfully uplifted in any redevelopment of the District, including through the choice of a culturally appropriate name. Currently, however, the representation includes broader Waiākea representatives as part of the HCDA Board with jurisdiction over this District. OHA recommends the Committee acknowledge the area’s significant cultural and historical importance, that is also in alignment with the District bounds outlined in the bill, and include representation to the Makaokū area.

Recognition of Makaokū as distinctive lands is particularly salient when viewed alongside the more recent experiences of nearby Hawaiian homestead communities, which have borne disproportionate environmental and social impacts over time. The construction of the Hilo airport, which divided long-standing community connections, and the subsequent industrialization of surrounding areas continue to shape lived experiences today. A redevelopment approach that acknowledges this history, and

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<sup>1</sup> P.L. 103-150 (1993).

<sup>2</sup> Haw. Const. Art. XI Sec. 1; Haw Const. Art. XII Sec. 4; *Ching v. Case*, 145 Hawai‘i 148 (2008).

<sup>3</sup> Historic Hawai‘i Foundation Story Map (Dec. 10, 2021), <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b378b80d74054f51816d820581905ba4>.

includes specific community, offers an opportunity not only to honor place, but also to move forward in a way that is more balanced, restorative, and responsive to community well-being.

As show in the maps below, Makaokū has specifical place-based ties, not the general large area of Waiākea.

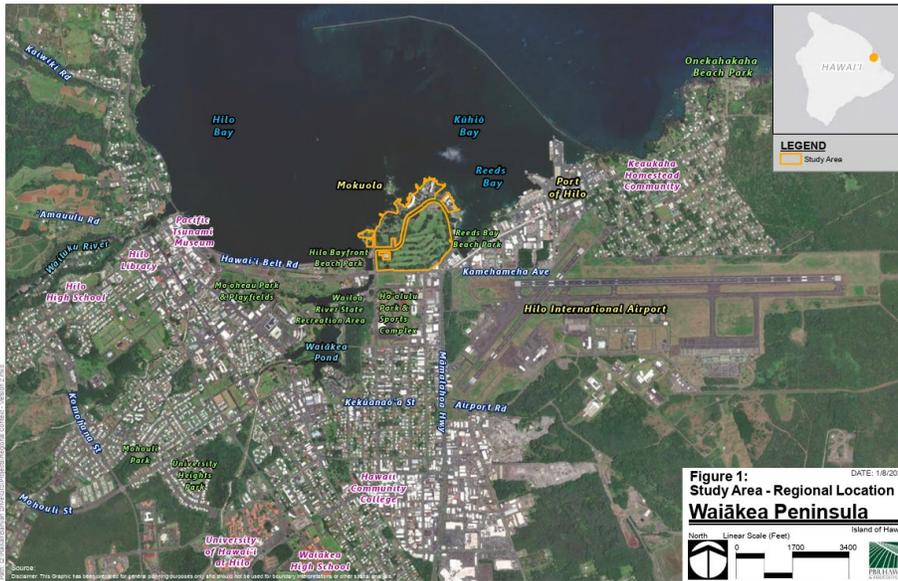


Figure 1 – A high-level overview of the lands proposed to be part of the new District (outlined in orange).

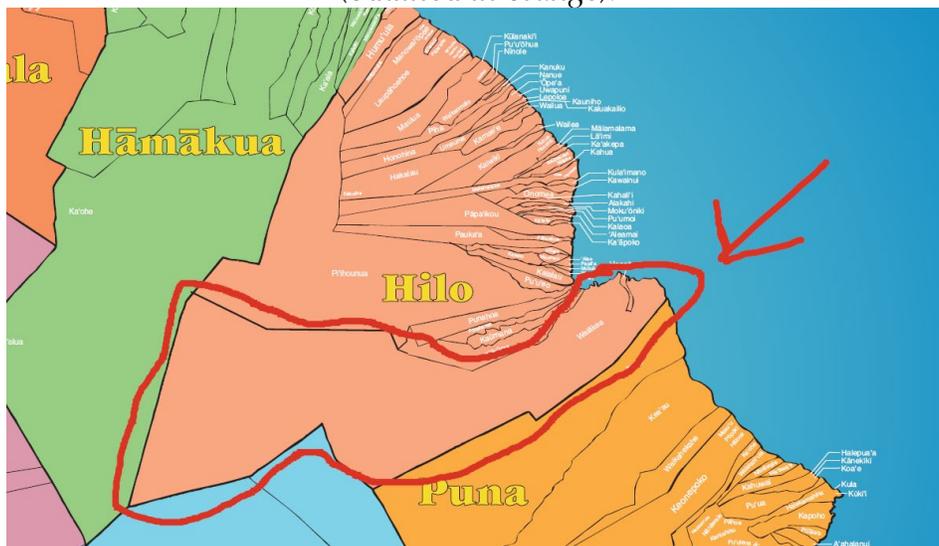


Figure 2- Ahupua'a of Waiākea.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Kamehameha Schools, “Nā Ahupua‘a a Moku o Hawai‘i,” available at <https://blogs.ksbe.edu/kmslc/files/2014/11/aaahawaii1.pdf>.

## Makaokū Descendents Should Have Voting Membership.

HCDA has pledged their commitment to ensuring a community driven planning process, and “community-focused redevelopment.”<sup>5</sup> The best community driven process for this District will involve appropriate representation by Native Hawaiian communities who know this area best –specifically Makaokū and not the general area of Waiākea – are most impacted by this redevelopment, and reside in the neighboring communities. Building off the unique nature of these lands being crown and government lands, and the rich history of this place, OHA reiterates its support for the inclusion of OHA and lineal descendant as voting members of the HCDA with jurisdiction over the District.

The inclusion of this Makaokū lineal descendant is critical to ensuring the cultural integrity vision of this bill, and OHA believes that these provisions can be strengthened by allowing OHA to assist in nominating these individuals. OHA brings demonstrated expertise in recruitment, evaluation, and nomination of candidates to state board and commissions through its existing kuleana to nominate candidates for the Island Burial Councils.<sup>6</sup> Notably, because the OHA Board of Trustees is governed by HRS chapter 92, Hawai‘i’s Sunshine Law, all candidates nominated by OHA must be confirmed at a publicly noticed meeting - ensuring transparency and meaningful opportunities for community input.

Accordingly, should the Committee choose to advance this measure, OHA recommends including the following amendments to 1) allow OHA and the Makaokū lineal descendant to serve as a members of the HCDA with jurisdiction over the District, and 2) for the governor to appoint the Makaokū lineal descendant member after consulting with OHA:

To accomplish the proposed amendments OHA respectfully recommends:

- (1) Amending the language beginning at page 11 line 18 to read as follows:  
“All members except the director of finance; director of transportation; county directors of planning or planning and permitting; director of business, economic development, and tourism; chairperson of the board of land and natural resources; the two experts on transit-oriented developed appointed by the president of the senate and speaker of the house of representatives, respectively; the chairpersons of the respective senate and house of representatives standing committees having jurisdiction over transportation; the chairpersons of the respective senate and house of representatives standing committees having jurisdiction

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<sup>5</sup> Hawai‘i Community Development Authority, 2025 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE HAWAI‘I STATE LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION 2026, 4 (2025).

<sup>6</sup> See HRS § 6E-43.5.

over housing; or where relevant, their respective designees; ~~and~~ the chairperson of the Banyan Drive Hawai'i redevelopment agency of the county of Hawai'i, or a designee, administrator of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; and the cultural specialists and Makaokū lineal descendant member, shall be appointed by the governor pursuant to section 26-34."

(2) Amending the language starting at page 17 line 20 to read:

Community development district; and  
"(J) The chairperson of the office of Hawaiian affairs, or the chairperson's designee; and  
(K) A lineal descendant of the Makaokū area."

(3) Amending the language beginning on page 11, line 17, to read as follows:

"The president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall each submit a list of six nominees for each district to the governor to fill the two district representative position for each community development district[.], with the exception of the cultural specialist and Makaokū lineal descendant members. For the cultural specialist and Makaokū lineal descendant members, the governor shall appoint these members following consultation with the office of Hawaiian affairs, and shall consider any recommendations submitted by the office of Hawaiian affairs."

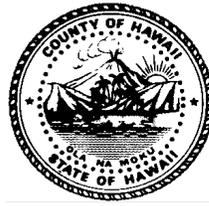
Due to the nature of these lands, what's at stake for Native Hawaiian communities, and the lasting impacts that these redevelopment efforts will likely have for generations to come, OHA also urges the Committee to take the necessary time and care these lands deserve with thoughtful community inclusion. Redevelopment is successful when community is involved.

For the reasons stated above, OHA respectfully provides these comments and urges this committee to incorporate our recommended amendments if it chooses to move forward with SB2001.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.  
Mayor

William V. Brillhante, Jr.  
Managing Director



James McCully, Chair  
Anna Liu, Vice Chair  
Kealohanui Browning  
Nathan Gaddis  
Alan Okinaka

## County of Hawai'i

**LATE**

### BANYAN DRIVE HAWAII REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Aupuni Center • 101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720  
Phone (808) 961-8288 • Fax (808) 961-8742

*Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer*

March 2, 2026

RE: SB 2001

Chair Chris Lee                      Vice-Chair Lorraine Inouye  
Chair Donovan Delacruz      Vice-Chair Sharon Moriwaki

The Banyan Drive Hawaii Redevelopment Agency (BDHRA) offers the following Comments on SB 2001.

The Hawaii Community Development Authority (HCDA) provides the statutory framework that ensures that the transfer from the Dept. of Land & Natural Resources (DLNR) to HCDA will maintain the public trust responsibilities. This is key to the revitalization of the Waiakea peninsula. SB2001 seeks to provide for efficient implementation with defined lines of authority. HCDA has been successful with complex projects in the past, based on its capacity to couple efficiency with transparency. This agency would like to express appreciation to the Chair of the Department of Land & Natural Resources for recognizing that another state department and its governing statutory authority, in this matter HCDA and Ch. 206e, provides the best path forward for the management of these public lands.

This Agency believes that decisions affecting the Waiakea Peninsula and the broader East Hawai'i community should include cultural specialists, lineal descendants and a representative from small businesses. This participation strengthens community involvement, improves long-term stewardship outcomes, and reinforces public trust. It is most important for the new district to enhance the public trust through integrating culture throughout the redevelopment planning. BDHRA supports a place-based governance, often known as "Home Rule", which ensures accountability and helps to avoid conflicts through the active participation of a range of stakeholders.

The establishment of the size and makeup of the new board and advisory committee will no doubt be fully debated through the legislative process. This Agency believes the preferred outcome would be best served through a clear establishment of the appointment criteria, the policy objectives that inform the makeup of these committees, and that there is a deliberative process that provides oversight.

The Waiakea Peninsula has a complex cultural, economic, and environmental history. Governance structures that prioritize local inclusion will always improve redevelopment outcomes. Clarity in statutory drafting will be important to ensure efficient implementation and avoid ambiguity regarding qualifications and authority.

The Agency respectfully submits these comments for your consideration.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide input.

James McCully, Chairman

BANYAN DRIVE HAWAI'I REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY



*Testimony of  
Mufi Hannemann  
President & CEO  
Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association*

*Committees on Water and Land  
Committee on Ways and Means  
Thursday, March 5, 2026*

SB 2001– RELATING TO THE BANYAN DRIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Chair Lee, Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA), representing hotels and lodging operators statewide, submits this testimony in strong support of efforts to revitalize Banyan Drive and the surrounding Waiākea Peninsula area.

As the state's largest private sector tourism organization, representing nearly 50,000 hotel rooms, and 40,000 lodging employees, HLTA is committed to maintaining a strong and flourishing tourism industry to keep our economy strong and our state moving forward.

Banyan Drive has long been recognized as one of Hilo's most iconic visitor corridors and a gateway to East Hawai'i. Its location adjacent to Hilo Bay, the cruise ship terminal, and major cultural and community events such as the Merrie Monarch Festival makes it uniquely positioned to serve as both a welcoming entry point for visitors and a vibrant gathering place for residents. However, years of underinvestment and deteriorating infrastructure have left the area underutilized and unable to meet its full potential.

From a tourism industry perspective, revitalizing Banyan Drive is essential to strengthening Hilo's visitor economy and ensuring the Big Island remains competitive with other destinations. A safe, attractive, and well-maintained waterfront district encourages longer stays, greater visitor spending, and repeat visitation. Improvements to landscaping, lighting, walkability, and public amenities will directly enhance the visitor experience while also improving quality of life for the surrounding community.

Importantly, thoughtful redevelopment of Banyan Drive can achieve multiple public goals at once. With appropriate planning and oversight, revitalization can support small businesses, create local jobs, promote cultural and recreational uses, and foster sustainable economic growth. The area's proximity to

historic and cultural sites presents an opportunity to highlight Native Hawaiian culture, local arts, and community programming in ways that are authentic and respectful.

HLTA also emphasizes that revitalization should be guided by long-term planning and coordination among state and county agencies, community stakeholders, and private sector partners. Establishing a clear framework for redevelopment will help ensure that improvements are resilient, culturally sensitive, and responsive to climate and environmental challenges facing coastal areas.

For the visitor industry, Banyan Drive represents more than just a roadway or hotel district, it is a symbol of Hilo's identity and a critical link between tourism and the local community. Reinvesting in this area will help restore pride in place, improve safety and accessibility, and reinforce tourism as a driver of opportunity for East Hawai'i residents.

For these reasons, HLTA strongly supports initiatives that advance the revitalization of Banyan Drive and urges the Legislature to continue prioritizing this area as part of the State's broader economic recovery and destination management strategy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.

Mufi Hannemann  
President & CEO  
Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:29:08 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nakoʻolani Warrington	Testifying for Kupuna for the Moopuna	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**STRONG OPPOSITION to SB 2001**

We, Kūpuna for the Mo‘opuna, a hui of Hawaiian Homes Commission Act kūpuna beneficiary farmers from Pana‘ewa, Hawai‘i, **testify in STRONG OPPOSITION to SB 2001.**

SB 2001 lands are Public Land Trust lands with requirements of the Hawai‘i Admission Act, Art. XII Sec. 4 of the Hawai‘i State Constitution that the Public Land Trust – ceded lands - **must be administered for the betterment of the conditions of native Hawaiians and for the general public.**

SB 2001 is part of a long range, long lease plan to alienate our public lands, with designs of longer terms, such as 99-year leases, for public lands, which would include Public Land Trust lands as well as “ceded” lands, taken through the unlawful overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and to which Native Hawaiians maintain unrelinquished claims. We are concerned over the lack of transparency and accountability in SB 2001 required by law. We native Hawaiians and the general public need more safe open spaces for the betterment of our ‘ohana. We do not need space launching facilities and military expansion that will negatively impact our homes and people. Makaokū needs more direction from the directly impacted communities of Keaukaha and Pana‘ewa, which we have fought years for by way of a South Hilo Community Development Plan; denied for years, denied still yet.

**NO to SB 2001.**



# Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

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**2025-2026**

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## **Testimony to the House Committee on Ways and Means**

**Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair**

**Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 10:16 AM**

### **RE: SB2001 SD1 Relating to the Banyan Drive Community Development District - SUPPORT**

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 350 businesses and individual members primarily on the east side of Hawai'i Island, we respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of SB2001**.

Banyan Drive is a key gateway to Hilo and holds significant cultural and economic importance. Anchored by landmarks such as Lili'uokalani Gardens and Coconut Island (Moku Ola), and located near Hilo International Airport, the area shapes first impressions for visitors and serves as an important space for our community. Yet it continues to face aging infrastructure, safety concerns, and underutilized properties.

SB2001 establishes the Banyan Drive Community Development District and Special Fund under the Hawai'i Community Development Authority, creating a coordinated and accountable framework for responsible redevelopment. This structure will help align infrastructure improvements, cultural preservation, and economic revitalization in a thoughtful and community-focused manner.

Revitalizing Banyan Drive is essential to strengthening Hilo's economy, supporting local businesses, and ensuring this important corridor reflects the best of our island. We respectfully urge your support of SB2001.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Carla Kuo  
Executive Officer  
Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:16:52 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cristina Holt	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Tina Holt. I am a resident of Hilo, Hawai‘i Island, and I submit this testimony in strong opposition to SB2001.

SB2001 proposes to establish a new community development district over stolen crown lands on the Waiākea Peninsula, lands to which Native Hawaiians have never relinquished their claims, and place governance of those lands in a structure controlled by the governor and legislative leadership, with community voices deliberately weakened.

We have seen this model before. For decades, these same lands have been handed to private developers through ground leases. The developers come in, extract what profit they can, and when things fall apart, the public pays the bill. Uncle Billy's Hilo Bay Hotel cost Hawaii taxpayers fourteen million dollars to demolish, a figure confirmed in DLNR Chairwoman Dawn Chang's own testimony. The state is now on the hook again for the Country Club Condominiums next door. Same story, different address. SB2001 does not fix this model. It institutionalizes it.

What this bill proposes is a structure where public land carries public risk but generates private profit. That is not economic development. That is socialism for developers, paid for by the people of Hawai‘i.

I am particularly troubled by the removal of the lineal descendant as a voting member of the governing body. The Lineal Descendants are the original stewards of this ‘āina. They carry genealogical ties, cultural kuleana, and ‘ike that cannot be replicated by consultants or replaced by an advisory committee. Demoting them from voting members to an advisory role, as HCDA recommended in HB2616, is not a technicality. It is a deliberate choice to sideline the people most connected to this land from the decisions that will shape its future for generations.

I agree with the testimony of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, which calls for OHA to serve as a member of the HCDA with jurisdiction over this district, for the lineal descendant of Makaokū to be restored as a voting member, and for OHA to have a meaningful role in nominating the cultural specialist and lineal descendant members. These are not unreasonable requests. They are the minimum standard for any process that claims to honor this place and its people.

I am also deeply concerned about the proposal for 99-year leases on ceded lands. As OHA notes in their testimony, multi-generational leases on stolen crown land lock out future generations from making decisions about their own ancestral territory. The blank appropriation lines in this bill compound that concern. This committee is being asked to authorize a governance structure and a special fund without knowing how much public money will flow through it or to whom.

The people of Hilo deserve a genuine community-driven process for the future of Banyan Drive, one that centers Lineal Descendants, honors the cultural and historical significance of this 'āina, and does not repeat the pattern of handing public land to private interests while leaving the community to bear the costs.

SB2001 as written does not do that. I respectfully urge this committee to oppose this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Tina Holt Hilo, Hawai'i

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 7:12:10 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am testifying in opposition of SB2001.

I agree with the points in OHA’s previous testimony on lands being “ceded lands” and that any development on these lands should include meaningful consultation and consideration of the Native Hawaiians.

I agree that having OHA being part of the decision making process is a step in the right direction.

However, I do not believe the current formation of Hawaii Community Development Authority is the right avenue to pursue revitalizing the area. Community and Native Hawaiian input needs to be the driver of the revitalization of an area such as this, and not merely input to be considered. This bill should be deferred and a new process, innovative process created in which Native Hawaiians and key community stakeholders drive the vision for this place.

If we want to change the way tourism and our economy looks, we need a new process. I recommend deferring this bill, and coming back next year with a new process in which the vision is created by Native Hawaiians and key community stakeholders (lineal descendants, non-profit community organizations, schools, and residents), and not led by businesses and corporations.

Our community and hosts (Native Hawaiians) need to drive future improvements, especially on public lands.

Mahalo for your consideration,  
Keoni Shizuma

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:39:57 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dana Keawe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONGLY OPPOSE SB2001!!!

Dana Keawe

Moku o Keawe

Keaukaha Action Network

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:15:30 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
april	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Why does this keep coming up. Why are we letting this imposter Govenor Green try to sell the lands to the highest bidders while pretending that he cares for the people of Hawaii. He has time and time again tried to come in and sell off the things that make Hawaii special and unique. We just fought against him trying to sell access to beaches to the hotels. Companies that just care about a bottom line instead of the land. These companies would surely pave paradise to put up a parking lot, and then when it is no longer profitable to keep that parking lot for them, they leave a pothole ridden dirty dumpsite for the exploited and now homeless and jobless locals and move onto the next paradise to sell. Please leave these stolen lands alone and leave it to the people who will take care of the land. Who know what it means to be a part of a community. Part of a delicate balance and ecosystem. Please do not let them sell to the highest bidders under the guise of compassion and kindness.

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:05:57 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nathaniel Montalbo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Measure goes against na kupuna and does not support kanaka maoli.

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:01:23 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Lee and Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Inouye and Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water, Land, Culture, and the Arts & Ways and Means,

My name is Jackie Keefe, and I **oppose SB2001**.

This bill creates a new development district over stolen crown lands and hands control to HCDA, not a community body. The section promising lineal descendants a seat at the table was gutted in committee.

I respectfully urge you **to kill this bill**, out of respect for the lineal descendants of Maka'okū.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 3:50:21 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Kau'i Young	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am writing to express my full opposition to SB2001. As 'ōiwi, I can never in good conscience support the ongoing theft of 'āina and disenfranchisement of Native Hawaiians. To all the 'Ōiwi who have signed off on this bill, who have signed off on the silencing of Kānaka to mālama 'āina and protect our kūpuna so that our mo'opuna can maintain our familial relationship into the future, your actions are hewa and you know it. We see you and we won't forget you. Shame on you, forever and ever. These lands were never legally forfeited to the US or to the state of Hawaii, and these lands were certainly never intended to be abused and raped in perpetuity by extractive and exploitative systems, such as capitalism and its inherent class warfare. Mai poina: he ali'i ka 'āina, he kauwā ke kanaka. Keep playing stupid games and we'll all be subject to stupid prizes. I oppose this bill and all its iterations. Kiko pau. It's not too late to scrap this bill and do the right thing. Me ke aloha 'āina pau 'ole, Kau'i Young.

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:18:01 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**STRONG STRONG SUPPORT!!!**

The BDCDD and Special Fund are urgently needed to revitalize the Banyan Drive area to the economic driver it used to be.

Mahalo!

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 9:57:53 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Catarina Zaragoza	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I, Catarina Zaragoza, am submitting this testimony in strong opposition of SB2001 to ensure that the Waiākea Peninsula Community Development Plan meaningfully recognizes and protects the rights, participation, and authority of Lineal Descendants connected to Maka’oKū.

I offer this testimony in solidarity with Lineal Descendants of Maka’oKū, cultural practitioners & community advocates, with deep ties to Hawai’i Island, who have worked closely with grassroots organizations, service providers, and the legislative processes to uplift the voices of those most impacted by state-led proposed development.

While SB2001 seeks to advance planning and redevelopment goals, this proposed bill fails to honor the Lineal Descendants of Maka’oKū as the original stewards of the designated Crown Lands in which the HCDA has proposed.

Lineal Descendants:

- Maintain genealogical ties to the ‘āina
- Carry kuleana to protect cultural resources
- Hold ‘ike that cannot be replicated through consultants or advisory groups

Any state-led redevelopment plan that does not formally include Lineal Descendants of Maka’oKū in decision-making risks repeating historic patterns, generational trauma of exclusion and harm. I strongly oppose SB2001.

Me ka oia’i’o,

Catarina Zaragoza

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 10:08:27 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Luke Kikukawa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose SB2001

SB2001 – Relating to the Hawai‘i Community Development Authority and the Waiākea Peninsula Community Development Plan

Submitted by: Luke Kikukawa

Position: OPPOSE SB2001

Aloha,

I, Luke Kikukawa, am submitting this testimony in strong opposition of SB2001 to ensure that the Waiākea Peninsula Community Development Plan meaningfully recognizes and protects the rights, participation, and authority of Lineal Descendants connected to Maka’oKū .

We are in a housing, healthcare, and food crisis in Hawai'i. We need meaningful development that supports long-term, low / middle income housing. We need investments in farms, schools, and community. We need to conserve the little natural environment that is left and not turn it into more concrete jungle that caters to tourists and lines the pockets of outside developers. We do not need more condos, second homes, or tourist developments that ignore the needs of residents and indigenous people. This project is a woeful repeat of the countless development projects that ignored the voices of native Hawaiians. I am in strong opposition of this bill.

I offer this testimony in solidarity with Lineal Descendants of Maka’oKū, cultural practitioners & community advocates, with deep ties to Hawai‘i Island, who have worked closely with grassroots organizations, service providers, and the legislative processes to uplift the voices of those most impacted by state-led proposed development.

The Lineal Descendants are the original Stewards of Maka’oKū.

The appropriate place name, Maka'oKū, also known by the state-led proposed development called Waiākea Peninsula, is not merely a redevelopment area. Maka'oKū is honored as kūpuna, an 'āina rich with cultural history, genealogy, and ongoing stewardship amongst the Lineal Descendants of Maka'oKū known as Waiākea Ahupua'a Crown Land Heirs. This predates the Hawai'i State Legislature Act 153, session laws of Hawai'i 1976 codified in chapter 206E-3 of the Hawai'i revised statutes establishment of the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) and the State of Hawai'i itself.

While SB2001 seeks to advance planning and redevelopment goals, this proposed bill fails to honor the Lineal Descendants of Maka'oKū as the original stewards of the designated Crown Lands in which the HCDA has proposed.

Lineal Descendants:

- Maintain genealogical ties to the 'āina
- Carry kuleana to protect cultural resources
- Hold 'ike that cannot be replicated through consultants or advisory groups

Any state-led redevelopment plan that does not formally include Lineal Descendants of Maka'oKū in decision-making risks repeating historic patterns, generational trauma of exclusion and harm. I strongly oppose SB2001.

Laulima i ka hāpai Pōhaku,

Luke Kikukawa

**LATE**

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 10:52:39 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Forest Frizzell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee,

I stand in opposition of this bill as its written. Do not lock stolen crown lands into a developer leases and push Kanaka Maoli out of the process while doing so. Kanaka should be making decisions on these lands, not the state.

Mahalo,

Forest

**LATE**

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 11:04:54 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Karen Ono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and members of WAM and Chair Chris Lee and member of WLA.

Mahalo for allowing me the opportunity to provide input and my strong support of SB2001. I believe this is an important part of Hilo and it's culture which we need to maintain. This is definitely needed now rather than later.

Again thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**LATE**

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 10:01:21 PM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bryan Young	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this measure to give Hawaiian land to developers. Don't give cheap leases to business. Give them to the Hawaiian people.

**LATE**

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/5/2026 12:01:05 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cheryl Ho	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill

**LATE**

**SB-2001**

Submitted on: 3/5/2026 9:51:26 AM

Testimony for WLA on 3/5/2026 10:16:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gabriele Friedman	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please allow the Kanaka Maoli real agency in this matter by ensuring a seat at the table where the decisions regarding the redevelopment of Banyan Drive is concerned.

The character and original rights to this area should be respected and protected.